

**In the Spirit Of Fred Hampton And Mark Clark:  
Carry On The Tradition Of Resistance**

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So when you select heroes about which [Afrikan] people ought to be taught, let them be [Afrikan] heroes who have died fighting for the benefit of [Afrikan] people.

Malcolm X

December 4, 1992 will mark twenty-three years since local agents of the U.S. imperialist state (Chicago police, under the direction of the FBI), launched a pre-dawn search-and-destroy attack upon an apartment at 2337 West Monroe Street, Chicago, assassinated Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, and wounded four other members of the Black Panther Party (BPP).

Immediately after the attack, the U.S. and its assassins stood behind a fabricated story, trying to conceal their real motives and methods. They claimed that illegally purchased weapons were in the apartment. There were weapons in the apartment, but all of them had been legally purchased -- a fact known to the assassins, their having been so informed by their paid agent provocateur, William O'Neal.

If the assassins knew that there was no legal justification for their mission, then why did they launch it? They did so because Fred Hampton and the Black Panther Party were leading forces -- and thus major targets -- in the revolutionary war between the U.S. and Afrikans inside its borders who struggle for national self-determination.

Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were murdered as they slept because they carried on a tradition of resistance to their people's oppression; they worked each day to awaken and to organize Afrikan people, and to build bonds of solidarity with other oppressed peoples, in a common struggle against U.S. settler-colonialism and international capitalist-imperialism, and to build a socialist society.

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The [Afrikan] youth and moderates must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teaching, they will be dead revolutionaries.

FBI Internal Memo, 1968

At the time of his assassination, Fred Hampton was twenty-one years of age, and sat as Chairman of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party. Chairman Fred, as he was affectionately and respectfully called, began his political activism as a fourteen-year-old high school student in Maywood, Illinois, where he organized a youth chapter of the NAACP.

Like most Afrikan youth of the time, Fred was influenced by the growing revolutionary movement of Afrikan and other oppressed peoples throughout the U.S. in the late 1960's. Fred's consciousness and practice reflected his political shift to the left, so much so that he drew the attention of the repressive forces even before he joined the BPP, and the FBI itself began to monitor his activity in 1967. Shortly thereafter, Fred, Bobby Rush and several others organized the Chicago chapter of the BPP, which soon grew into an organization that influenced oppressed communities not only in the city, but throughout the state and the entire U.S.:

They began to negotiate with Chicago street gangs, such as the Blackstone Rangers, Disciples, and Vice Lords, attempting to convince them to give up their violent "gangbanging," and to focus instead on the true enemy -- the government and the police. They built the original Rainbow Coalition which united the Panthers, the Puerto Rican Young Lords Organization, the Young Patriots, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and, for a time, certain [Afrikan] street gangs.

They opened a Breakfast for Children Program, first at the Better Boys Foundation, then later at several other locations in the city, and fed hundreds of hungry young children before they went to school. Fred was spreading the message throughout the city, constantly speaking at colleges and high schools and meeting with a wide range of leaders and organizations. He led by example, starting his day at six in the morning at the Breakfast Program, and would never ask someone to do something he would not do, from selling the Panther newspaper to defending the Panther office from police attack.

At the same time, the FBI, both nationally and locally, was increasing its efforts to, in its words, "neutralize the Panther Party and destroy what it stands for."

(December 4th Committee, Fred Hampton 20th Commemoration, pp.2-3)

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The moment imperialism arrived and colonialism arrived, it made us leave our history and enter another history.

Amilcar Cabral

The activities of the BPP took place within the context of the national democratic stage of the revolutionary struggle of Afrikans in the U.S. to regain the independence that We lost more than three hundred years ago.

When our foreparents were forcibly uprooted from their societies on the Afrikan continent and brought to the "New World," We began our history as a new people -- a colonized people -- who began a tradition of struggle to resist colonialism and to regain our independence as a new nation in the world.

Afrikan men and women from different parts of the continent who had spoken different languages, now found themselves chained together and in need of a common tongue. Peoples who had previously worn different dress, expressing different cultures, now found themselves sharing the experience of a unique form of colonialism, wherein the colonial subjects were transported from their homelands to lands being conquered by the colonial powers. Not only was a new people -- a new, oppressed nation -- being formed; early bonds of solidarity were also being formed between ourselves and the peoples of the Native Nations who were also being subjugated by the settlers:

The first settlement within the present borders of the United States to contain [Afrikan] slaves was the victim of the first slave revolt. A Spanish colonizer, Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, in the summer of 1526, founded a town near the mouth of the Pedee river in what is now South Carolina. The community consisted of five hundred Spaniards and one hundred [Afrikan] slaves. Trouble soon beset the colony. Illness caused numerous deaths, carrying off in October, Ayllon himself. The [Native Nations] grew more hostile and dangerous. Finally, probably in November, the [Afrikans] rebelled, killed several [colonizers], and escaped to the [Native Nations]. This was a fatal blow and the remaining colonists -- but one hundred and fifty souls -- returned to Haiti in December, 1526.

Just as We resisted and fought to regain our independence, the colonizers sought to repress our resistance, to kill our warriors and leaders, to disrupt the independence movement:

The system of slavery demanded a special police force and such a force was made possible and unusually effective by the presence of the poor whites...First of all, it gave him work and some authority as overseer, slave driver, and member of the patrol system. But above and beyond this, it fed his vanity because it associated him with the masters...He never regarded himself as a laborer, or as part of any labor movement...The system was held stable and intact by the poor white...Gradually the whole white South became an armed and commissioned camp to keep [Afrikans] in slavery and to kill the [Afrikan] rebel.

(W.E.B. DuBois, Black Reconstruction in America, p.12.)



When fourteen agents of the U.S. imperialist state attacked the BPP and assassinated Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, they were carrying on a tradition of their own, with the help of William O'Neal, who must also be seen as carrying on a particular tradition -- that of a traitor:

On September 13, 1663, a favorite slave of a Mr. John Smith of Gloucester County, Virginia, betrayed an extensive conspiracy of [Afrikan] slaves...An unknown number of the rebels was executed. The day of the betrayal was set aside by the colonists as one of thanksgiving and prayer to a merciful god who had saved them from extermination. The traitor was given his freedom and 5,000 lbs. of tobacco.

They gave William O'Neal a \$300.00 bonus.

Throughout our long struggle to regain independence as a people, We have developed many forms of resistance. And, all forms of resistance are recognized as threats to oppressive power, and they receive attention from repressive forces in overt and covert forms, and in all spheres of social life.

Heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson resisted oppression both inside and outside of the ring. He was a symbol of the ability of Afrikan people to resist the social hegemony of the oppressive state, and to defeat the state in its own arena. When Jack Johnson was forced out of the U.S., he stood then on an international level as a more threatening symbol of resistance to U.S. oppression. The U.S. attacked him (and through him, they attacked all Afrikans), outside the ring by using their press and their law as weapons (e.g., the FBI/Dept. Of Justice). They attacked him inside the ring by employing a "Great White Hope."

What would today be called counterinsurgency tactics were also employed against Marcus Garvey and the U.N.I.A. Planting infiltrators and seeking informers and traitors inside the U.N.I.A.; using so-called leaders of other Afrikan organizations to attack Garvey and to undermine the influence of the U.N.I.A., were methods used by the U.S. in the war waged by Afrikans to resist oppression and to establish our independence. Again, the U.S. Department of Justice was used as a major weapon to make Marcus Garvey, the freedom fighter, appear as a criminal in the eyes of Afrikan people, and to influence the decline of the mass movement then being led by the U.N.I.A.

Paul Robeson was the subject of U.S. government surveillance and repression from at least 1943 to 1967. This activity (e.g., physical surveillance, wiretaps, house buggings and mail interceptions), was conducted by the FBI, the CIA, the intelligence divisions of the U.S. Army and Navy, as well as the intelligence services of other colonial powers.

When the U.S. took steps to prevent Paul Robeson from speaking and singing in the U.S., and denied him a passport with which to travel abroad on behalf of his people, these actions were in response to Robeson's growing stature as an active participant in the struggle of Afrikan peoples to resist the cultural hegemony of U.S. and other colonial powers, and to regain independence. And, "...if large

numbers of [Afrikans] in America had difficulty grasping the ultimate significance of Robeson's cultural explorations, colonial and racist leaders abroad and in the United States did not." (Sterling Stuckey, Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America, p.337.)

Fred Hampton was assassinated by the same forces that attacked W.E.B. DuBois, as he, too, carried on the tradition of resistance. DuBois' mail was intercepted, his attempts to speak on Afrikan college campuses were undermined, and he, like Garvey, was criminalized when he and others were indicted by the U.S. as "agents of a foreign government." DuBois was an agent in the service of Afrikan people, in our struggle for self-government.

Following on the heels of the attacks against Robeson and DuBois, the U.S. began to focus attacks upon Martin Luther King, Jr., and the civil rights movement, and upon the Nation of Islam and the independence movement.

Fred Hampton and Martin Luther King, Jr. both carried on the tradition of resistance. By the spring of 1968, King was no longer dreaming. The harsh reality of U.S. reactionary violence inside its borders and throughout the world had led King to an ever-more radical anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist stand. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated because he was not only resisting U.S. oppression; he was potentially the most threatening example of a mass movement's transition from mere resistance, to struggle for revolutionary nationalist state power.

As early as 1960, the FBI started a comprehensive counter-intelligence program originating in Chicago, designed to disrupt and neutralize the Nation of Islam. Although the bulk of files are still secret, released documents reveal that one of the primary purposes of the program was to exacerbate the tensions between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad, and these activities either directly or indirectly led to the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965...

As the civil rights movement moved to the north, and urban ghetto uprisings punctuated [Afrikan] people's demands for national liberation, the FBI greatly expanded their counter-intelligence programs against the [Afrikan] movement and its leadership. ( Counter-Intelligence: A Documentary Look at America's Secret Police. )

On August 25, 1967, the Director of the FBI (who operated under the authority of the U.S. Attorney General, who in turn operated under the authority of the President of the United States), issued a Memo establishing an additional counter-intelligence program, designated as "Black Nationalist-Hate Groups: Internal Security."

The Memo was circulated to twenty-three Field Offices, which were instructed to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, or otherwise neutralize" the activities of Afrikan nationalist organizations, "their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and

supporters...The activities of all such groups of intelligence interest to this Bureau must be followed on a continuous basis so we will be in a position to promptly take advantage of all opportunities for counterintelligence and to inspire action in instances where circumstances warrant."

The Memo further instructed FBI agents to prevent the consolidation of, and recruitment by, Afrikan nationalist forces, and to "exploit through counter-intelligence techniques the organizational and personal conflicts of the leaderships of the groups and where possible an effort should be made to capitalize upon existing conflicts between competing [Afrikan] nationalist organizations."

FBI agents were also encouraged to disrupt and neutralize groups "through the cooperation of established local news media contacts or through such contact with sources available to the Seat of Government, in every instance careful attention must be given to the proposal to insure the targeted group is disrupted, ridiculed, or discredited through the publicity and not merely publicized."

In February, 1968, the FBI issued another Memo, to "expand the Counter-intelligence Program designed to neutralize militant black nationalist groups from 23 to 41 field divisions so as to cover the great majority of black nationalist activity" in the U.S. The Memo emphasized the U.S. need: to prevent the coalition of nationalist groups; to prevent the rise of leadership which might unify and electrify the movement; to "prevent these nationalists from gaining respectability and prevent the growth of these groups" among Afrikan youth.

Also listed again were the names of the organizations and individuals that were to receive particular attention under this program: SNCC, Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown; SCLC and Martin Luther King, Jr.; RAM and Max Stanford; the Deacons for Defense and Justice; CORE; the NOI and Elijah Muhammad. It should be noted that there is no mention of the Black Panther Party and its leadership in these memos. The particular concern with which the U.S. held the BPP is seen by the FBI's creation of a separate file and counterinsurgency program targeting the party.

Two years after it was organized in October, 1966, the BPP had thirty-eight chapters throughout the U.S., an approximate membership of 4,000, and became the major target of the U.S. government's domestic counter-revolutionary thrust, largely because of the effectiveness of the BPP's mass-based revolutionary democratic program.

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The purpose of the Marion Control Unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in the society at large.

-- Ralph Aron, former Warden, Marion Federal Penitentiary

The U.S. attack upon the BPP and other organizations saw many activists killed and maimed; some were driven into exile, and some were driven mad. Many



activists were driven into the jails and prisons of the U.S., charged as common criminals, although their alleged offenses were well-crafted fabrications, their real "offenses" being that they were armed (or unarmed) political combatants who fought for the national independence of Afrikan people.

We've seen that the U.S. has a record of bringing criminal charges against Afrikan freedom fighters, as they did against Jack Johnson, Marcus Garvey, Paul Robeson and W.E.B. DuBois. Many activists imprisoned by the U.S. in the 1960's and 1970's remain in U.S. prisons, and are now struggling for recognition as Political Prisoners and as Prisoners of War status to which they have a legitimate claim under international law as it applies to peoples struggling against colonial and racist regimes, e.g., Afrikans inside the U.S. who struggle against its oppression and for their self-determination as a distinct people.

As the statement by former Marion penitentiary warden Ralph Aron indicates, U.S. prisons are being used to house political prisoners and prisoners of war, in the U.S. government's attempt to suppress revolutionary "attitudes" on both sides of prison walls.

What is common knowledge to Ralph Aron and other servants and supporters of the U.S., must become common knowledge to Afrikan and other oppressed peoples, and to progressive peoples throughout the world: Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War continue to be held by the U.S. not merely for their alleged past "crimes," but because of their potential for contributing to the future development of revolutionary power. Captured combatants represent a threat to the U.S. because the contradiction between it and oppressed peoples remains unresolved. We must embody the legacy of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark; We must carry on the tradition of resistance, and continue to pursue national independence.

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